

effect, which could not be prevented without a miracle; while the main design is to produce happiness and guard against evil.

It may be asked, however, by what principle we can determine what is the design of a contrivance, and what the incidental effect. Why select a part of the effects, and call them the object aimed at by the contriver, while we regard others as incidental, and merely permitted, not intended?

The principle on which we make this distinction is very clear. We judge of the design of a contrivance by its predominant tendencies and effects. If evil as often results as good, misery as often as happiness, we could not decide whether the design was benevolent or malevolent, or an indifference to both. But the benevolent tendency and effects of every natural contrivance are so obvious, and so immensely outweigh all its evil results, that we are compelled to admit the design of the Author of nature to be benevolent. And, therefore, when we see evil occasionally result from such contrivances, we are authorized to say that this is only an incidental effect; not, indeed, wholly undesigned, for we cannot doubt that God has a design in the permission of all evil. But for each particular arrangement and movement in nature we can discover a predominant and benevolent object.

Take another example from the human frame. In that frame we find a multitude of organs, nearly all of which are obviously adapted to a particular use. Now, the anatomist cannot lay his finger upon one of them, and say, This was intended to produce derangement and suffering in the system. Here is a muscle contrived to clog the operations of its neighbours; here a blood-vessel adapted to corrupt the blood and produce disease; here a gland whose object is to secrete a poisonous fluid, to contaminate the whole system; here a nerve made to produce pain; here a plexus of vessels suited to bring on disease. On the contrary, this anatomist perceives at once that all the organs of the animal system, and their colocation, are fitted in the best possible manner to produce health. It is obvious at a glance that this is their design.

But if such be the fact, how happens it that so few persons pass through life without disease? Is it all to be imputed to an abuse and perversion of the organs and powers of life?